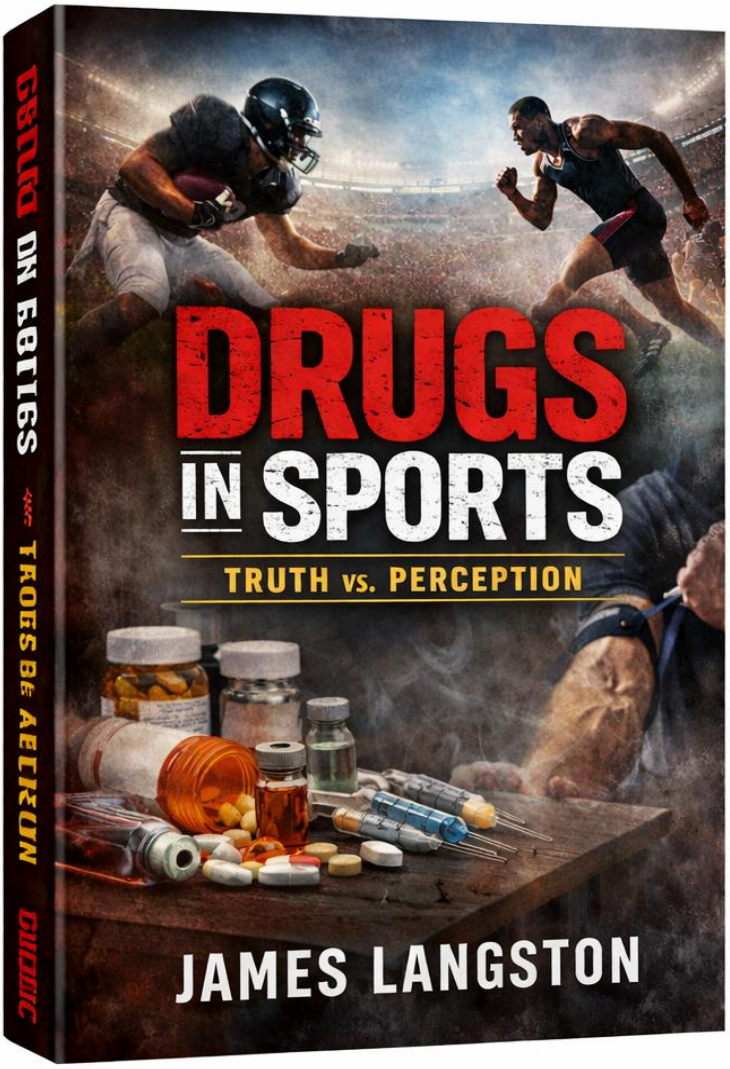

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DRUGS IN SPORTS

TRUTH VS. PERCEPTION

'The Price to be the Best'

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Dedication

‘ To Those Who Refuse to Compromise ‘

This book is dedicated to those who have stood at the crossroads—
when the pressure was real,
when the temptation was strong,
when the cost of doing right seemed too high—
and chose integrity anyway.
To the athlete who refused the shortcut.
To the competitor who chose character over applause.
To the individual who walked away when others gave in.
You may not have received the recognition you deserved.
You may not have been celebrated by the world.
But heaven saw.
And what you held onto—
was worth more than any title, record, or reward this world could offer.
This book is also dedicated to those who fell…
who compromised…
who made decisions they wish they could take back—
yet still carry within them the desire to make things right.
This is for you.
Because failure is not final.
And your story is not over.
There is still a path forward.
There is still hope.
There is still redemption.
And finally—
this is dedicated to the next generation.
May you learn from what others did not.
May you see clearly what others ignored.
May you choose wisely when your moment comes.

‘What Readers are Saying’

‘ Voices of Insight, Experience, and Truth ‘

“This book pulls back the curtain on a reality many suspect but few are willing to confront. It is honest, sobering, and deeply needed in today’s competitive culture.”

— Former Professional Athlete

“As a coach, I’ve seen the pressure athletes face behind the scenes. This book doesn’t just expose the problem—it speaks to the heart of why it happens.”

— Collegiate Head Coach

“A powerful and unapologetic look at the cost of chasing greatness the wrong way. Every young athlete should read this before stepping onto the field.”

— Youth Sports Director

“This is more than a book about sports—it’s a book about identity, pressure, and the consequences of misplaced priorities. It challenges you to think beyond the scoreboard.”

— Sports Psychologist

“Few books dare to address this issue with such clarity and conviction. It doesn’t condemn—it calls people back to truth.”

— Senior Pastor

“I’ve worked with athletes at the highest levels, and this message is long overdue. The internal battle is real, and this book captures it with precision.”

— Professional Athletic Trainer

“A compelling read that balances truth and compassion. It doesn’t just expose the darkness—it points to a way out.”

— Christian Counselor

Foreword

‘ When Truth Must Be Told ’

There are books that inform…
and there are books that confront.

This is one that does both.

I have known James Langston for many years—not just as an author, but as a man of conviction, discipline, and unwavering commitment to truth. What you are about to read is not the product of casual observation. It is the result of a life that has seen pressure, endured testing, and chosen integrity time and time again.

In a world where success is often measured by visibility, performance, and results, this book dares to ask a deeper question:

At what cost?

That question alone has the power to unsettle everything we think we know about achievement.

Because beneath the surface of competitive sports—beneath the trophies, endorsements, and highlight reels—there exists a reality that is far less glamorous.

Pressure.

Expectation.

Comparison.

And, for some, the temptation to cross lines that should never be crossed.

What makes this book so necessary is not simply that it addresses the issue of performance-enhancing drugs and substance use in sports. Many have attempted to do that. What sets this work apart is its willingness to go beyond the surface and deal with the heart behind the decision.

James does not merely expose behavior—

he examines motivation.

He does not just point out the problem—

he leads the reader to the place where real change begins.

And that is a rare gift.

As someone who has worked closely with individuals in both ministry and leadership, I can say with confidence that the greatest battles are rarely external.

Preface

‘ Why This Book Had to Be Written ‘

There are moments in life when something stirs within you…
not because you were looking for it—
but because it found you.

This book was born out of one of those moments.

I had planned to step away for a season.

To rest.

To allow time to pass without the pressure of writing.

But one morning, while watching a television interview, I heard a testimony that would not leave me.

A former professional athlete spoke openly about his struggle with drugs, the decisions that led him down a destructive path, and the consequences that followed.

It was not polished.

It was not rehearsed.

It was real.

And in that moment, something within me was stirred.

Not just because of what he said—

but because of what it represented.

A reality that many know exists…

but few are willing to confront.

The world of sports has always been associated with discipline, sacrifice, and excellence.

But behind the scenes, there is another story.

A quieter one.

A story of pressure.

Expectation.

Comparison.

And for some—

a willingness to turn to substances in order to gain an edge, maintain performance, or simply keep up.

Acknowledgements

‘ Gratitude for the Journey ‘

No work of this nature is ever accomplished alone.

While the words may bear a single name, the journey behind them is shaped by the influence, support, and encouragement of many.

First and foremost, I give all honor and glory to God.

For the strength to write…

for the conviction to speak truth…

and for the grace that continues to guide every step.

Without Him, this work would not exist.

To my wife, Cecilia—

thank you for your unwavering love, patience, and support through every season of life.

From the early days of military service…

to the demands of ministry…

to the long hours of writing—

you have stood beside me, steady and faithful.

Your strength has often carried more than words can express.

To my children and grandchildren—

you are a constant reminder of what truly matters.

Your lives, your growth, and your future are part of the reason this message had to be written.

May you always choose what is right over what is easy.

To those I have served with in the United States Navy—

thank you for the lessons in discipline, perseverance, and leadership that have shaped my life.

Those years were foundational, and their impact continues to be felt.

To my brothers and sisters in ministry—

thank you for your encouragement, your prayers, and your shared commitment to the Gospel.

Introduction

' Truth Behind the Spotlight '

There is what you see…

and there is what is real.

For generations, the world of sports has been celebrated as the ultimate display of human potential—

strength, discipline, determination, and excellence.

We admire the athletes.

We celebrate their victories.

We replay their greatest moments.

And in doing so, we build an image—

one that is polished, powerful, and inspiring.

But behind that image…

there is another story.

A story that is not always told.

A story that does not appear on highlight reels or championship stages.

It is a story of pressure.

The pressure to perform.

The pressure to improve.

The pressure to remain relevant.

And for some—

the pressure to win at any cost.

This is where perception begins to separate from reality.

Because what appears to be natural ability…

is not always natural.

What appears to be strength…

is not always earned.

And what appears to be success…

is not always clean.

This is not true for every athlete.

1

The Dream Begins

‘ Where Greatness First Takes Place ‘

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?
So run, that ye may obtain” — **1 Corinthians 9:24**

The field was still wet from the night before.

A thin fog hovered just above the grass, drifting slowly as if the morning itself had not fully awakened. Off in the distance, the faint sound of a bouncing ball echoed—steady, rhythmic, intentional.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

A boy—no older than twelve—moved across the empty field with purpose. His breath formed small clouds in the cool air, his shoes damp from the dew, but none of it seemed to matter. He wasn’t there because he had to be.

He was there because he wanted to be.

“Again,” he said quietly, almost like a prayer.

He positioned himself, eyes locked on an imaginary defender. A quick step to the left. Pivot. Acceleration. He cut across the field with surprising sharpness, then stopped, turned, and lifted his hands as if catching a pass that only existed in his mind.

He smiled.

Not because anyone was watching.

But because, in that moment, he could already see it.

The lights.

The crowd.

The roar.

Somewhere deep inside, a picture had formed—one that no one had given him, but one that had taken hold of him.

Greatness.

3

The First Compromise

‘ Crossing Lines Once Thought Sacred ‘

“Abstain from all appearance of evil” **— 1 Thessalonians 5:22**

The gym smelled different.

It wasn’t the familiar mix of rubber mats and sweat that he had grown used to. There was something sharper in the air now—something clinical, almost sterile.

He noticed it the moment he walked in.

“New place,” his teammate said, tossing his bag onto the bench. “Better equipment. Better results.”

Better results.

The phrase lingered.

The room was filled with athletes—some he recognized, others he didn’t. But there was something they all had in common.

They looked… advanced.

Not just strong.

Enhanced.

“Come on,” his teammate motioned. “I want you to meet someone.”

They moved toward the back, past racks of weights and machines that gleamed under bright overhead lights. In the corner stood a man—older, composed, watching everything without seeming to watch anything.

“This is him,” the teammate said. “I told you about him.”

The man extended his hand.

“I’ve heard a lot about you,” he said calmly. “You’ve got potential.”

There it was again.

Potential.

They talked for a few minutes—nothing unusual at first.

Training.

Recovery.

5

The Cost of Winning

‘ Success That Slowly Destroys Within ‘

“For they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare… which drown men in destruction and perdition” **— 1 Timothy 6:9**

The results came quickly.

Faster than he expected.

Strength increased.

Recovery improved.

Endurance extended.

Where once he had struggled late in games, now he finished strong. Where fatigue used to slow him down, now he pushed through without hesitation.

And people noticed.

“Whatever you’re doing—keep doing it.”

“You’ve taken it to another level.”

“You’re unstoppable right now.”

The words came from everywhere.

Coaches.

Teammates.

Even opponents.

For a moment…

It felt like everything he had worked for was finally coming together.

No more doubt.

No more questioning.

No more feeling like he had to prove himself.

He was producing.

Consistently.

And with that consistency came something powerful:

Validation.

7

The Science of Performance

‘ Enhancing the Body Artificially ‘

“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things…” — **1 Timothy 4:8**

This is not just about sports anymore.

It’s about control.

The control of the body.

The control of outcomes.

The control of limits that God Himself designed.

What was once called training…

has, in many places, become manipulation.

The modern athlete is no longer just developed—

He is engineered.

Behind the highlights, behind the endorsements, behind the roaring crowds…

there is a quiet question that few are willing to ask:

How much of this is natural… and how much is manufactured?

Because the truth is, the game has changed.

Strength is no longer just built—it’s accelerated.

Recovery is no longer just earned—it’s shortened.

Endurance is no longer just trained—it’s extended beyond what the body was designed to sustain.

This is not evolution.

This is intervention.

The human body—fearfully and wonderfully made—has been turned into a project.

Measured.

Modified.

Managed.

And in that process, something sacred is often overlooked:

9

A Culture of Silence

‘ Protected, Promoted, and Ignored ‘

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy…” **— John 10:10**

At some point…

the cost stops hiding.

What was once internal…

becomes visible.

What was once managed…

begins to surface.

Because the human body can only carry so much.

The human mind can only suppress so much.

The human soul can only endure so much.

And when those limits are exceeded…

something gives way.

This is where the conversation changes.

No longer about performance.

No longer about advantage.

But about consequence.

Real consequence.

The athlete who once looked unstoppable…

now struggles to maintain what once came easily.

The body begins to respond differently.

Injuries take longer to heal.

Fatigue lingers.

Recovery slows in ways that feel unfamiliar.

What once felt like control…

now feels uncertain.

Because the body remembers everything.

11

Stories of Fall and Redemption

‘ From Bondage to Breakthrough ‘

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” **— Galatians 5:1**

Freedom is real.

Not theoretical.

Not symbolic.

Real.

We have seen it.

We have read about it.

We know it exists.

But here is the truth that must be understood:

Freedom is possible… but it is not automatic.

Because being set free…

and staying free…

are not the same thing.

Some have experienced a moment of deliverance—

but never developed a pattern of freedom.

And without pattern…

freedom does not last.

Because what once held you…

does not disappear quietly.

It remembers.

The habits.

The triggers.

The environments.

They remain.

Waiting.

12

What Was and What Can Be

‘ Freedom Beyond the Illusion of Greatness ‘

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve…” **— Joshua 24:15**

Every path—no matter how long, how complicated, or how hidden—
eventually leads here.

Not to another option.

Not to another delay.

But to a decision.

Because no matter how much you’ve read…

no matter how much you’ve seen…

no matter how clearly things have been revealed—

there comes a moment when truth stops being information…

and becomes a confrontation.

A confrontation not with someone else—

but with yourself.

And in that moment…

everything becomes clear in a way it wasn’t before.

You begin to see the full picture.

The choices that were made.

The paths that were taken.

The compromises that were justified.

Not through the lens of explanation—

but through the lens of truth.

And truth has a way of removing every excuse.

Because now, it’s no longer about what happened back then—

It’s about what you will do now.

This is where many people pause.

Not because they don’t understand—

Epilogue

‘ When the Game Ends ‘

There comes a moment…
after everything has been said…
after every page has been turned…
after every truth has settled—
when the noise fades.
No more arguments.
No more justifications.
No more internal debates trying to hold onto what you now know must be released.
Just silence.
Not an empty silence—
but a revealing one.
The kind of silence where everything becomes clear.
Where the weight of truth is no longer something you are resisting—
but something you are recognizing.
Because once truth has been fully seen…
it changes how you think.
It changes how you feel.
It changes how you see yourself.
And it changes what you are willing to accept.
That is where you are now.
Not at the beginning.
But at the threshold.
A place between what was…
and what can be.
And in this place…
there is no confusion.
Only clarity.
You know what this book has revealed.

Final Thoughts

‘ The Price Was Never Worth It ‘

“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity” **— Ecclesiastes 1:2**

There is a truth that echoes across time…

A truth spoken long before stadiums were filled, records were broken, and names were made famous—

Yet it speaks just as clearly today:

“Vanity of vanities… all is vanity.”

Not because achievement is wrong.

Not because effort is meaningless.

But because anything pursued without truth… without integrity… without God—

will never satisfy what it promised.

This is the realization that comes at the end of the chase.

After the applause fades.

After the spotlight shifts.

After the moment has passed.

What remains?

Not the highlight.

Not the recognition.

But the condition of the soul.

Because success, as the world defines it…

is temporary.

It is built on moments.

Measured by performance.

Sustained by perception.

And perception…

is fragile.

It changes.

It shifts.

Reflection Questions — Examining the Heart

‘ Honest Questions That Lead to Real Change ‘

Before you turn the page…
pause.
Not to rush ahead.
But to look within.
Because everything you have read…
was not just meant to inform you—
it was meant to reveal something in you.
And if you are willing to be honest…
these questions will help you see clearly.
Take your time.
Don’t answer quickly.
Answer truthfully.

1. What Defines Success in Your Life?

Is it what you achieve…
or who you are becoming?
Is it measured by recognition…
or by integrity?
Because how you define success…
will determine what you pursue.

2. Have You Compromised for Acceptance?

Have there been moments where you knew something wasn’t right—
but you did it anyway?
To fit in.
To move ahead.
To be seen.
What did it cost you?
And was it worth it?

A Call to Freedom — An Invitation to Change

‘ From Knowing… to Responding ‘

You’ve read the truth.
You’ve felt the weight.
You’ve answered the questions.
Now…
this is your moment.
Not to think about it.
Not to revisit it later.
But to respond.
Because truth was never meant to sit in your mind—
it was meant to change your life.
And if you are honest…
you know something needs to change.
Not around you.
Within you.
Because the issue was never just the behavior.
It was the heart behind it.
And the heart…
is where God begins.
Let me say this as clearly as I can:
God has not given up on you.
Not because you got it right—
but because He is still reaching for you.
Right now.
You are not too far gone.
You are not too broken.
You are not beyond forgiveness.
No matter what you’ve done…

About the Author

‘ The Voice Behind the Message ‘

James Langston is an author, pastor, missionary, and retired United States Navy veteran whose life has been marked by service, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to truth.

Born and raised in El Campo, Texas, as one of eight children in a single-parent household, James learned early the values of perseverance, responsibility, and faith—lessons that would shape the course of his life and calling.

He faithfully served in the United States Navy for 27 years (1976–2003), where he developed the leadership, resilience, and global perspective that would later influence both his ministry and writing.

Following his military career, James answered the call to ministry and was licensed and ordained through the World Evangelism Fellowship in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Since then, he has devoted his life to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ with clarity, conviction, and compassion.

As the founder of Pilgrim Outreach Ministries International, James has carried the message of hope beyond borders—serving in nations such as the Philippines and Italy, and reaching individuals and communities with the life-changing truth of God’s Word.

His ministry is rooted in the command of Mark 16:15:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

James is known for his direct, no-compromise approach to truth—paired with a deep pastoral heart for those who are struggling, searching, or seeking restoration.

Through his writing, he addresses real-life issues with spiritual clarity, helping readers confront difficult truths while pointing them toward hope, healing, and transformation.

He is the author of numerous impactful works, including:

* The Truth “They” Do Not Want You to Know
* Real Answers to Life’s Tough Questions (2nd Edition)
* So Much Wasted Time (2nd Edition)
* Words of Encouragement (4th Edition)
* The Return: 100 Days That Redefined America’s Future

Other Books by James Langston

— Continuing the Conversation —

If this book has spoken to you…
there is more.

Each of these works was written to challenge, encourage, and guide you into a deeper understanding of truth, faith, and purpose.

Featured Titles

* The Truth “They” Do Not Want You to Know

Uncover deception. Confront reality. Embrace truth that sets you free.

* Real Answers to Life’s Tough Questions (2nd Edition)

Straightforward, biblical answers to the questions people are afraid to ask.

* So Much Wasted Time (2nd Edition)

A powerful wake-up call to redeem your time and realign your priorities.

* Words of Encouragement (4th Edition)

Daily strength for weary hearts—uplifting, practical, and faith-filled.

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To challenge the heart.